

323 the neighborhood of the hut, where it is left to burn slowly, until all the wood and coals have been consumed. Neither paint, glaze, nor plastic ornamentation is applied nowadays.

323 ANCIENT POTTERY VESSELS.—The pottery objects found in many parts of the Mosquito Coast, chiefly in old burial grounds, indicate a much greater skill in this art than that possessed by the present-day inhabitants of the country. Most of such ware is unpainted, but fine plastic ornamentation was applied to the knob handles and occasionally to the legs also. The designs represent chiefly heads of jaguars, alligators, turtles, and birds. Fragments of tripod vessels with legs modified into animal legs may also be found; sometimes these legs are hollow and contain clay balls as rattlers. In the shell mounds or kitchen middens near the sea fragments of pottery vessels with figurine handles have been discovered. A geometric motive, which is often found on old pottery vessels and on stonework, is the incised guilloche or rope pattern, which may have a curvilinear or an angular construction.

172. ANCIENT CLAY MASKS.—From the interior of the Mosquito Coast, probably the Sumu territory, the discovery of human heads, busts or entire figures, made of clay, has been reported. The material used for this purpose is said to have been mixed occasionally with gold dust. These objects are supposed to be the likenesses of chiefs or other prominent persons who had been buried at the spots where these finds were made. A number of these "masks" were brought to England from the interior of the Mosquito Coast about the year 1775, and eight of them have been described and depicted by Rogers (107). As these masks have their backs concaved in a cylindrical form, they were probably parts of sepulchral urns.

COTTON TEXTILES

248 CULTIVATION OF COTTON.—The art of weaving has not been mastered by the young generation, but cotton (*Gossypium* sp.; M.: *wahmuk*; S.: *wahmak*) is still cultivated in a desultory way. The bushes, which attain a height of from 8 to 12 feet, may be found in the neighborhood of almost every hut; they flower the whole year round, and at any time buds and open bolls may be found on the same plant.

286 A FEMALE OCCUPATION.—Dyeing and spinning cotton and weaving it into cloth is exclusively woman's work. Erquemelin (Fr. edit.: II, 269), who wrote during the second half of the seventeenth century, states that the women only spin the cotton and that the men do the weaving.

286 TYPES OF FABRICS.—The elder Sumu women still weave cotton into loin cloths (M.: *palpura*; T. and P.: *dōh*; U.: *ani*), girdles or